

Best Practices of Advocacy Within Jordanian Business Associations

Contract No.:	278-C-00-02-00210-00
Contractor Name:	Chemonics International, Inc.
USAID Cognizant Technical Office:	Office of Economic Opportunities USAID/Jordan
Date of Report:	May, 2004
Document Title:	Best Practices of Advocacy Within Jordanian Business Associations Final Report
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Activity Title and Number:	Achievement of Market-Friendly Initiatives and Results Program (AMIR 2.0 Program) F/Filing Preparation, ECI Component Work Plan No. 7233.5

Funded by U.S. Agency for International Development

This report was prepared by Edward Priola, in collaboration with Chemonics International Inc., prime contractor to the U.S. Agency for International Development for the AMIR Program in Jordan.

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OVERVIEW

This report is divided into the following segments:

- 1) Report Summary
- 2) Training Observations
- 3) Comparative Analysis: Jordan
- 4) Recommendations
- 5) Interviews, Technical Assistance and Appraisals.

Discussion contained within this report is based upon appraisal interviews with, and technical assistance presentations before, a number of Jordanian business association representatives (analysis is accordingly limited in quantitative and representative scope). The aforementioned interviews and appearances were conducted on subjects related to the public advocacy practices of the participating business associations and were held on behalf of the AMIR Project during the period of June 20–28, 2004 in Amman, Jordan. Briefings and preparatory conferences during this period included:

- Meeting with Steve Wade, Chief of Party, AMIR Program
- Discussion with Sean Jones, Deputy Director, Office of Economic Opportunities, USAID
- Meeting with Ibrahim Osta, BMI Team Leader, AMIR
- Several meetings with Randa Muasher, Business Management Specialist, AMIR
- Advocacy Training Session with Business Association Board Members (one day)
- Advocacy Training Session with Business Association CEO's (one day)
- Advocacy Presentation to Jordan Vision 2020 Steering Committee.

Segment **1) Report Summary** below provides a brief description of the report's observations and its primary findings.

Segment **2) Training Observations** provides feedback regarding the efficacy of the training seminars/presentations. Several unambiguous phenomena have augmented the understanding of the advocacy sophistication and the appropriate modes in which business association representatives might assimilate new practices. At this stage, curriculum and scheduling suggestions for future trainings are offered based on the experience.

Discussion contained within the segment entitled **3) Comparative Analysis** utilizes comparable training and facilitation experiences with business association representatives in formerly socialist countries (such as Albania, Romania, Azerbaijan, Serbia, Russia, and Tanzania) as a baseline for contrast and discussion regarding Jordanian business association counterparts.

The next segment, entitled **4) Recommendations**, contains counseling and advice based upon the experiences of this consultancy and the knowledge base of the consultant. Recommendations are divided into two categories:

- A) AMIR-BMI Program; Advocacy Capacity Building
- B) Jordanian Business Associations; Strategic Approaches

Segment **5) Interviews, Technical Assistance and Appraisals** provides a concise narrative account of various fact-finding meetings with business associations that were conducted during the period of this consultancy. The initial part of it summarizes the suggestions commonly offered to most or all of the business associations. Individualized advice, provided to specific business representatives during those meetings, is denoted where appropriate in the subsequent second part.

SUMMARY

Many of the findings contained in this report are straightforwardly consistent with the findings of the assessment conducted by **Global Strategy Consultants on behalf of the Center for International Private Enterprise and AMIR on April 18, 2002 in Jordan**. Most of the same business associations participated in both consultancies; this consultancy has found that they have all improved in their advocacy competency, while maintaining the same ranking relative to one another.

The findings of this report are on the whole positive with regard to reaching the AMIR-BMI Component's strategic objectives of **creating a more open and democratic civil society coupled with a free market economy**. The data collected during this consultancy served to verify that, despite some perpetual shortcomings of the participating business associations, there have been meaningful advances toward these objectives.

Although there is evidence of meaningful advances toward utilizing the best practices of advocacy, there are some past calls for improvement in a range of essential activity areas that remain unanswered. Some of the deficiencies cited in this report were originally cited in the consultancy report of **Global Strategy Consultants (GSC) on April 18, 2002**. For example, the,

“Need to improve Jordanian business association communications and membership recruitment efforts and their public policy advocacy sophistication,”

continues to be an unrealized objective/priority today (GSC Report, Diagnostic Assessment Scoring, page 3). Another unanswered call can be repeated verbatim from the GSC Report when its author stated,

“ While using some of the normal communication techniques of business associations from other nations, the Jordanian groups have failed to grasp the need for sophisticated identification of vital target audiences, for refinement of their association messages, and for selecting appropriate media in order to tell their associations' stories” (GSC Report, Recommendations, Page 5).

In addition to these unanswered calls, it has been found that although broad long-range undertakings such as Vision 20/20 are appreciably underway, business leaders do not appear as immediately effective as they should be given their advantageous positioning. This may be explained in part by the fact that the legislative branch only recently became active again, but does not address why there are fewer policy successes in interaction with the executive branch. So why aren't things working better?

Again on the positive side, one evident outcome/conclusion of this consultancy is that Jordanian business association leaders emerge enthusiastic, highly professional, and well

positioned to influence the policy decisions of the executive and legislative branches of government. This beneficial positioning derives in some measure from the King's emphasis on government receptivity, transparency, and business development.

More immediately, the technical presentations conducted during this consultancy must to be considered fruitful in as much as they clearly complimented progress toward AMIR-BMI Component's strategic objectives and exhibited that the subject matter is suitably directed toward relevant topics.

The response to the training information met with some initial resistance on the part of several participants (i.e. there was an eagerness to skip the fundamentals and theoretical underpinnings and leap immediately into the practical applications). An intellectual struggle was maintained until participants began to understand that the course material was being presented in a cumulative manner. Unfortunately, because of the non-homogenous knowledge base of the participants, fundamentals and theory could not have been bypassed. It became apparent that even the most knowledgeable participants had some deficits regarding advocacy fundamentals. To be clear, these knowledge deficits were not so severe as to prevent their effective advocacy involvement within the Jordanian civil society, but would have rather weakened their ability to instruct others. The ability to transfer advocacy technology information swiftly in a chaotic advocacy arena is crucial.

In contrast to some of their counterparts in formerly socialist countries, Jordanian business associations appear to lack a cohesive business-community approach (they are more fragmented), particularly regarding routine advocacy practices toward intervention in government policy formulation (they do not currently play as a team in which each member assumes a defined function). This may be because there is a surprisingly high level of support for each sector within the respective ministry and in part because the benefits of collaboration have not yet been fully recognized. What they should practice is the so-called task functionalism within extensive advocacy coalitions (e.g. one business association assumes the role of public relations coordinator, another one the role of grassroots mobilization manager, and yet another of campaign leader or the coordinating brain).

Although systematic in thought and manner, their approach to building a Jordanian-specific technical foundation for advocacy related "best practices" appears to be significantly under-developed. Most notably, there is an apparent lack of awareness that the members of the Jordanian business community should adopt complementary strategies upon which divergent industries can contribute specific resources and efforts toward common strategic goals. In line with this approach, each organization would also assume a specific leadership role with regard to strategic goals. For example, one organization would become the champion of tax reform; another one would step forward as the champion of regulatory reform and so on. This strategic leadership approach allows a maximization of expertise and organizational efficiency.

Furthermore, a strategic team-oriented approach allows the quick creation of ad-hoc coalitions aimed at tackling the exigencies of the chaotic legislative process. This also prepares the Jordanian business community to quickly integrate non-business players in such coalitions. For example, a coalition involving business representatives, labor

representatives, environmentalists and academic representatives could be formed to advocate legislation concerning government transparency and freedom of information. Many tax related issues also lead to the formation of such ad-hoc coalitions.

To some degree, the aforementioned deficiencies are recognized and are currently being addressed. It is a central recommendation of this report that these deficiencies might be more straightforwardly addressed by a concerted effort on the part of the Jordanian business community toward building a professional network and strengthening their social fraternity. They can clearly benefit from developing a **professional advocacy leadership association** for the purpose of long-lasting cross-fertilization and cataloguing of innovative and successful solutions to Jordanian advocacy issues. Technical assistance in this regard must be long term and oriented toward building self-sustaining and institutionalized mechanisms of ongoing advocacy learning and cooperation.

TRAINING OBSERVATIONS

One key finding of this consultancy was the encouraging confirmation that most Jordanian business association advocacy operatives have achieved an elevated level of technical knowledge regarding its fundamental practices. It appears that they are now prepared, and consequently must shift, to the next level of applying sophisticated strategies as an integrated business community.

By and large both advocacy technical trainings conducted during this consultancy can credibly be deemed as successful and educationally productive. The events were particularly well organized and executed: the technical equipment and assistance were superior; the venue was excellent and communicated the serious character of the event to the participants without ambiguity.

As evidence of the didactic value of the two full-day training sessions, a considerable number of well informed animated exchanges occurred during the presentations between the instructor and the participants. This also indicated a high level of interest on the part of the participants (this happened during the subsequent Vision 20/20 presentation as well).

Another beneficial outcome of the trainings was dispelling myths regarding the practice of advocacy. Most notably, dispelling the misconception that there are single/unique and correct answers for each advocacy stratagem question. Many of the initial participant comments and questions suggested that a fair number believed that all-purpose answers to their questions regarding their individual organizational advocacy scenarios were readily available (conspicuously, this was the case regarding the several lawyers in attendance). The same question, “What is the recipe for success?” occurred in numerous forms.

Based upon the training feedback it appears that an ongoing and systematic approach to developing innovative and imaginative advocacy strategies and self-instruction strategies is deficient within the Jordanian business community. This training was largely oriented toward instilling the concept that each strategic advocacy question is comprised of a unique set of circumstances for which there are many responses. By the end of the trainings most participants acknowledged the value of the trainings as providing systemic blueprints for advocacy strategies rather than pre-fabricated all-purpose answers. Perhaps the best result of both trainings was the reduction of linear thinking regarding advocacy and the acceptance that advocacy occurs in an ever changing and chaotic environment.

Overall, the most successful aspect of the trainings was the eventual recognition by the participants that advocacy has definitive limits, and embracing the best international practices of advocacy does not imply a take-it-or-leave-it choice regarding the value of using advocacy technology. Compared with the same trainings conducted in various other countries this concept was more readily adopted.

There are a number of curriculum-oriented approaches that should evidently be implemented regarding future advocacy trainings. Foremost among these is that training presentations should be elevated to a graduate degree level of instruction. Consequently, this graduate instruction must include a significant amount of case study and analysis.

As well, sessions ought to be divided into several modules of shorter duration. Despite the high level of interest invested by virtually every participant during the instruction, it was evident that most all of them became distracted and restless in the last hour of the training. Many participants expressed concern with either returning to work or leaving for home. As a result, it was not possible to fully experience the most valuable part of the presentation, the group exercise and analysis.

Shorter, more intensive sessions would ideally be spread over the course of a week to ten-day period. Readings should be distributed well in advance of the trainings (two weeks) so that participants could maximize the interaction with the instructor. Allowing a day or more in between each of these more intensified sessions would also serve to provide participants with opportunities for out-of-session group exercises and/or analysis. Time constraints prevented the conducting of numerous group exercises. Future trainings need to provide more of these exercises because participants learn complex advocacy lessons with greater appreciation and more group interactions will enhance opportunities for building business association coalitions (i.e. genuine team building).

In this vein, it would be sensible to schedule predictable trainings on a routine basis (i.e. follow-up consultancies once every quarter) over the course of at least one year for a select group of participants who would benefit from a sophisticated and cumulative learning experience (see also recommendation for self-sustaining academy/institution to conduct trainings routinely for smaller groups). A number of seminars ought to be held on expanding the participants' imagination and creativity, by employing techniques such as: brainstorming, mind mapping and matrix modeling.

It is acknowledged that, despite its advantages, conducting several shorter presentations for large groups may not be feasible. In this case it may be more advisable to conduct future trainings for several smaller groups (organized according to their level of advocacy competence and/or experience) during shorter sessions. In this way more focus could be placed upon the needs of each participant relative to the "real-life" circumstances of their respective business associations.

Future trainings ought to incorporate more in-depth historical analyses of advocacy campaigns (both failures and successes), particularly where and when Jordanian examples are available. Suggested topics are: Comparative Legislative Systems, Lobbying Strategies, Institutional Branding (policy oriented) etc.

Prospectively, it will be beneficial to integrate technical trainings with interview and appraisal meetings. By design, trainings should necessarily take place before all the meetings and appraisals, so that both the consultant and the business association representative possess a uniform baseline of discussion.

AMIR's Diagnostic Guideline served as a helpful tool during interview and appraisal meetings. As an annex to this guideline, and in order to facilitate the after-action reporting of information gathered during interviews and appraisals, it would be beneficial for AMIR and future guest consultants to develop and distribute a rudimentary template/check-list of interviewing points (i.e. a fill-in-the-blanks form). This rudimentary checklist ought to be forwarded to the business associations in advance of their meetings, so that they can better prepare their responses. As a spin-off, this ought to result in more fluid and focused discussions.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The current advocacy related circumstances of Jordanian business associations appear analogous to those of many business associations in countries with a formerly socialist history. Based upon this consultant's direct (albeit subjective) observations of business associations in several post-communist countries during recent years (Albania, Romania, Azerbaijan, Serbia, Russia, and Tanzania), Jordanian business associations face many of the same start-up challenges. Most immediately notable amongst them are:

- Timelines of democratic emergence. Most have experienced a decade of democratic development in which business associations were born and are now maturing.
- Most business associations have less than fully comprehensive programs of advocacy and are only recently developing comprehensive advocacy related coalitions.
- Most business associations have a brief history of interaction with decision makers and even fewer can be considered highly effective advocates for legislative and regulatory issues.

On the other hand, the current circumstances of Jordanian business associations contrast with those of business associations in formerly socialist countries in two noteworthy ways. Firstly, **morale** appears genuinely and significantly **higher** among Jordanian business leaders than their counterparts in many of the formerly socialist countries mentioned above. Immediately noticeable is the relatively low level of cynicism among Jordanian business association leaders with regard to the interactions of civil society, government, and legislatures. Secondly, based upon the interviews conducted for this consultancy (and the many resulting conversations), Jordanian business representatives come into view as more inclined to accept new modes of behavior. They more readily display their willingness to adapt new strategies. This is very encouraging, in as much as most advocacy experts working in formerly socialist countries tend to identify the need for psychological change (i.e. mentality) as the primary obstacle to successful civil society participation in the governing process.

There may be some intervening variables worth acknowledging when making analogies between formerly socialist countries and Jordan. For example, the lack of cynicism among Jordanian business representatives may reflect the impact of the King upon the readiness of ministerial officials to embrace interaction with the business community. Conjunctively, it may also be reflective of the relatively low level of corruption reported in the public sector. Widespread corruption reported within formerly socialist countries is generally accepted as being highly corrosive upon the morale and perception of civil society's effectiveness.

Having acknowledged the positive mentality of the Jordanian business representatives, it must be stated that training participants expressed some noteworthy reservations with regard to the socially conservative and family oriented culture of Jordan, compared to

Western societal models. Paradoxically, despite the relative openness toward adopting advocacy “best-practices” and high level of morale, there remain significant cultural issues to be considered. There is a propensity, by some business association representatives, to assert that Jordan is culturally different, and that many (possibly most) international lessons of advocacy are inapplicable.

In light of several notable cultural distinctions (i.e. being a Kingdom, being Islamic, having an extended family orientation), Jordanian business associations appear to have a substantially greater challenge than their counterparts in formerly socialist countries do when trying to convince the general public that it will benefit from adopting internationally recognized advocacy practices. This feedback/observation should be shared with future advocacy consultants.

As a final comparative point, in contrast to some of their counterparts in formerly socialist countries (which have developed cohesive business communities), Jordanian business associations appear fragmented. This happens particularly regarding routine advocacy practices of intervention in government policy formulation (they do not currently play as a team in which each member assumes a defined function). This may be because there is a surprising level of support for each sector within the appropriate ministry and in part because the benefits of collaboration have not yet been fully recognized (see recommendations regarding functionalism in the first segment, Report Summary).

RECOMENDATIONS

This segment contains counseling and advice based upon the experiences of this consultancy and the knowledge base of the consultant. Recommendations are divided into the following categories:

A) AMIR-BMI Program; Advocacy Capacity Building

B) Jordanian Business Associations; Strategic Approaches

The good news is that often enough the feedback acquired during this consultancy confirmed that most of the business associations have begun to implement many of the current best practices of advocacy. This allows shift from a program of teaching advocacy basics toward recommendations that favor more advanced levels of programmatic and strategic orientation. The best news is that future instructors are positioned to facilitate the self-learning of high quality program participants.

A) AMIR-BMI Program; Advocacy Capacity Building

RECOMMENDATION: Groom Advocacy Entrepreneurs

There is a vital need for advocacy entrepreneurs in Jordan. Imagination and innovation regarding organizational advocacy approaches appear to be in short supply. Perhaps this can be attributed to the conservative heritage of the country. Or maybe this can be attributed to the absence of a perceived need (i.e. governmental grants are available and the King's interventions create an apparent willingness on the part of decision makers to engage in dialogue).

Hence, perhaps the most all-purpose, yet necessary, recommendation that can be offered Jordanian NGO's concerning the building of their advocacy capacities comes with regard to strengthening their inherent tactical creativity. Based upon participant performance during training sessions and the individual organizational interviews, there is a scarcity of innovative and imaginative techniques regarding advocacy campaigning. This point will take on greater significance in the years to come as Parliament members become more mature, relative to the executive branch, as policy brokers.

More imaginative advocacy tactics would serve to capture the attention of policy allies, persuade decision makers, and win public support. A practical spin-off from employing creativity could be the identification of untapped and lucrative new funding sources to support their advocacy activities as well.

Future training therefore should be oriented toward facilitating exploration of inventive and innovative advocacy techniques (gimmicks, publicity stunts, attention devices) as appropriate within Jordan. A laboratory-like approach to testing new techniques in focus-group arrangements ought to be employed during training sessions (approaches such as brainstorming, mind mapping and matrix modeling can also be utilized as previously mentioned).

More specific advice for individual organizations is provided in the fifth segment of this report, entitled Interviews, Technical Assistance and Appraisals.

RECOMMENDATION: More networking events

As previously mentioned, existing strategic deficiencies can be more straightforwardly addressed through a concerted effort on the part of the Jordanian business community toward building a professional network and strengthening their social fraternity. This strategic team-oriented approach aids the quick creation of ad-hoc coalitions aimed at tackling the exigencies of the chaotic legislative process.

There are many imaginative types of events that would help nurture the relationships between advocacy professionals well in advance of the need for actual interaction, some examples being:

- Monthly breakfasts/dinners
- Coalition/strategic planning retreats conducted in relatively isolated locations (no cell phones)
- Annual award programs for the recognition of best practices.

RECOMMENDATION: Hands-On/Practical Training

In the future, trainings that emphasize hands-on experiences shouldn't be a side-dish; they should more often be the main course. Debate and presentation skills and those more explicitly related to advocacy, such as lobbying and campaign planning simulations, would well serve the Jordanian business association executives. Based on the feedback obtained during this consultancy, they are grounded in enough theory already. Self-conducted monthly group exercises (as a result of quarterly consultant visits, and e-mail follow-up communications) will not only help bond their teams, but will also offer them the opportunity to perfect their techniques. In order to play as a team they need to practice being a team.

For more detailed recommendations regarding technical assistance training see segment number two, entitled Training Observations.

RECOMMENDATION: Increased Membership Focus

In light of Jordan's societal propensity toward government dependence (40% of the workforce is directly reliant upon government money sources) the rationale for constantly increasing business association membership levels takes on greater significance. It is not purely because it is important to have more dues paying members or because it is important to demonstrate support or opposition of potential policy proposals. It is because ultimately it is imperative to demonstrate that greater proportions of successful business association members are creating wealth (taxable wealth impresses the public and decision makers greatly). Successful association members will necessarily become the role models that will lead others to create businesses and alleviate the population's dependency on public funds (This will predictably attract more policy allies etc.). More directly, creating

taxable wealth is an indispensable part of building **a more open and democratic civil society coupled with a free market economy** (AMIR-BMI strategic objective).

Membership benefits unrelated to advocacy are important enticements to building membership levels. These tangible benefits, which more often come in the form of personal or commercial services, were lacking with the majority of the organizations interviewed. Examples of these kinds of benefits can be found on business association web sites from around the world, including: medical insurance, affinity credit cards, travel discounts, investment advice, etc. Instruction regarding their implementation ought to be part of the technical assistance for capacity building.

B) Jordanian Business Associations; Strategic Approaches

RECOMMENDATION: Promotion of Ad-Hoc Policy Coalitions

Jordanian business associations must undertake the creation of policy coalitions that reach beyond their immediate industry and beyond the business community as well. Building coalitions that reach to an extended community of stakeholders has not yet caught on in terms of advocacy activities.

It isn't just more look-alike members that business associations need. They need policy allies that don't look like business people as well (i.e. more farmers, mechanics, housekeepers and fewer ties and jackets). It is a broader cross-section that is required to convince policy makers that the needs of the business community are synonymous with the larger society. In order to accomplish this goal business association leaders must strive to frame policy issues as widely as possible. Focus groups and surveys should more routinely be used to determine who might become organizational allies and shape new legislation accordingly.

There is a greater need to frame business association issues in the context of social responsibility and benefits to the society (with an even more direct connection to benefiting extended families). This is required because many citizens greet business representatives with some suspicion. Business association representatives would be more effective advocates if they would be viewed as champions of the public welfare. It is essential that business be viewed as an opportunity system available to all of society.

Hence, business associations must at times reach out to traditional policy opponents on select issues (consumer groups, environmental NGO's, labor organizations). This should also be the case with previously neutral societal sectors (such as service and religious organizations). It is recommended that a limited number of causes be taken up for the primary purpose of building bridges and nurturing an altruistic image of the Jordanian business community.

An earlier report example cited one potential coalition involving business representatives, labor representatives, environmentalists and academic representatives that could be formed

to advocate legislation concerning government transparency and freedom of information. Many tax related issues also lead to the formation of such ad-hoc coalitions.

The operative concept here is that combination of many “special interests” totals the public interest. Joining with other interest sectors creates long lasting credibility for the business community with the general public and decision makers.

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt Community Functional Roles

Advocacy communities are analogous to the villages of early times. Villagers joined one another for mutual security and common needs (carpenters, soldiers, farmers etc.) Similar sets of relationships exist within the politically conservative and politically liberal advocacy communities in Europe, the US, and beyond. This model of functional relationships also exist within advocacy related labor networks, consumer rights networks, environmental networks, trade association networks, and business networks around the globe.

Business community leaders in Jordan will benefit immensely from adopting this collaborative model in whole or in part. In this scheme each organization will adopt a distinct task orientation within the larger community that will create value in its association with other groups in the advocacy arena. This is accomplished by each organization seeking functional niches that lead to a stable identity as the particular organization is most responsible for its adopted purpose. For example, some organizations are suitable for grassroots mobilization of thousands of members while others are characterized as being more suitable for research and policy statement development, while others are more suitably prepared to distribute direct mail, or produce commercials, while others are better as direct lobbyists.

Assuming functional roles within the business association community has the added benefit of creating a leadership “brand” identity for the organization. This brand identity is particularly advantageous when organizations seek outside grant funding and/or raise money from domestic sources such as membership or stakeholder bases. For example, within the population of American taxpayer advocacy organizations, the National Taxpayer’s Union is known as the organization that supports the call for a Constitutional Amendment to requiring a balanced federal budget, whereas Citizens against Government Waste is a taxpayer organization that concentrates on wasteful expenditures within the annual federal budget. There are also many other taxpayer related organizations such as Americans for Tax Reform that concentrate on legislation that will improve the collection of taxes relative to the average citizen taxpayers. Each of these groups uses their role identification as a rallying rationale for their mass mail solicitations and event fundraising efforts.

RECOMMENDATION: Host Public Hearings

The initiation of civil society sponsored public hearings should be strongly encouraged in Jordan. This type of event, which is often sponsored by governmental institutions, is used to involve civil society representatives in policy making in many established democracies. More recently this type of structured public event has been used with great success by NGOs in several developing countries (India, Romania, and Albania).

In Romania the business sector sponsored an exceptionally successful public hearing on a government proposed, “Lobby Law.” The hearing included presentations by many government officials, members of parliament, legal experts, and interested NGO representatives. The hearing was credited for substantially altering the content of the proposed law. Additional hearings were conducted in Romania on other important subjects such as the national labor code. Albanian civil society groups participated in a hearing on national youth issues, as well.

Use of formal public hearings would allow the business community to constructively introduce important topics to the public and decision makers. It would provide for the placement of well-researched information and articulated policy initiatives directly into the hands of decision makers. Decision makers would benefit because they could rightly claim to have heard all sides to an issue before a large public gathering complete with media coverage.

RECOMMENDATION: Generation of Basic Policy Papers

An increased use of brief policy statements is a critical next step of Jordanian business associations. Production of these documents is a vital part of any sophisticated advocacy strategy. They serve to rally grassroots support, galvanize coalition supporters, and convince policy makers of the merits of policy initiatives. The truth is that these documents are far simpler to generate than the interviewed business association executives actually suppose.

Many Jordanian business association executives indicated that they were considering how they could hire experts to research and write long and complex documents. Some indicated that their design and drafting process was lasting periods that exceeded a year. The Advocacy training of this consultancy emphasized that today’s advocacy related policy papers were essentially short and easy to comprehend documents (samples were provided) for which the accumulated information was largely available through public sources (i.e. online etc). These shorter policy briefs should become the standard practice. AMIR sponsored workshops should emphasize hands-on writing skills and drafting exercises.

RECOMMENDATION: Begin Parliamentary Initiatives

The Parliament has only recently become fully engaged in dialogs with the civil society but now is the time to begin establishing relationships. It must be acknowledged that these relationships may take years before they become fully fruitful but there is no avoiding the need to engage parliament representatives immediately, directly, and systematically.

The need to build membership levels is especially important whilst anticipating future parliamentary policy contests. The need to focus on influencing future parliamentary elections must enter all strategic planning and deliberations regarding policy as well.

It is worth mentioning that participant concern was raised on several occasions regarding the central role and societal influence of family clans. This point must be recognized in strategic planning directed toward shaping relationships with Parliament as well. There appears to be small cause to believe that advocacy operatives cannot employ the same advocacy best practices to influence clan leaders as they do to influence the larger public or decision makers.

A similar point is that advocacy concerning policy issues necessarily start earlier in most parliamentary systems than they do for example in the American Congressional system. An advocacy strategy in most Parliamentary systems will inevitably include convincing political leaders to shape party platforms well before they are addressed in the formal legislative process. In other words, clan influence does not appear to significantly mitigate the fundamentals of advocacy.

INTERVIEWS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND APPRAISALS

All counseling and/or individualized organizational recommendations contained within this report were at the outset shared with the participating business association. **The participating business associations were made aware that the counseling and/or recommendations they received would appear in this report.**

The good news is that often enough there was no compelling rationale for offering advice regarding many of the current practices concerning advocacy. Jordan's business associations are performing scores of actions well as individual entities. There are several activities they could be implementing better as individual entities and a number of others they need to implement better as team members.

For the sake of brevity much of the discussion below is limited to individual organizational observations and recommendations. By and large only individualized advice and counseling are presented in this segment (i.e. there were a number of recurring and community inclusive recommendations that are mentioned, and have been consolidated where convenient, previously in report). Where a critique can be applied to the entire business association community it has been previously offered elsewhere in the report.

So as this report's earlier recommendation segment recognized, it is worthwhile to reiterate that there is a need for an ongoing and systematic approach to increase innovative and imaginative advocacy strategies and self-instruction strategies and this appears to be a major deficiency in the Jordanian business association community. To some degree every one of the organizations interviewed shared this deficiency. It is also appropriate to reiterate that a primary finding of this training consultancy was that most Jordanian business associations' advocacy efforts have achieved an elevated level of technical knowledge regarding the essential practices of advocacy. Consequently, they must now move to the next level of applying sophisticated strategies as an integrated business community (i.e. play as a team in which a amalgamation of many apparent "special interests" amounts to the perceived public interest.) or risk being marginalized in the policy arena. The interviews and technical assistance appraisals discussed below, conducted during this consultancy, served to support this finding as well.

Without exception, the board members and association executives demonstrated that they possess the superior educational depth and tactful quality to succeed in the advocacy and public policy arena.

If there was to be a first place among the interviewed business associations it would be awarded to **Bilal O. Abuzeid, Acting CEO, Information Technology Association – Jordan**. His organization plainly attained the highest position on the list of interviewed associations in terms of demonstrable advocacy capacity, applied resources, effective procedures, and methodology related to the best practices of advocacy. About the only significant critique that can be reasonably offered to the Information Technology Association of Jordan is that its performance might be more imaginative.

It is clear that the association ought to embrace more involvement in policy coalitions on legislative initiatives in the future but there is no substantial evidence of eagerness on their

part to engage as such in a wider variety of these activities. Conversely, on their individual initiative they score well in shaping their own organizational public image (unquestionably complimentary to successful advocacy). They do this by engaging in activities that promote connecting 3,000 Jordanian K-12 schools to the Internet by 2007. To their public image credit it must be noted that they do work in concert with related private and public organizations.

That being said, they are in fact more than sufficiently systematic on their approach to involving their membership in targeting and prioritizing policy issues (a set number of members can send a letter to their advocacy committee and call upon association attention and actions). Their printed materials are well researched and graphically professional.

Also placing high among the interviews of business associations would be the one conducted with **Samer I. Asfour, General Manager, Amman World Trade Center**. Asfour is an impressive and well-educated (three masters degrees) representative for the Trade Center who displayed a willingness to orient his organization toward more policy coalition activities. His organization deserves high marks regarding their advocacy capacity, demonstrated through the presentation of well-researched issue briefings and policy papers. They also appear to understand the need to use public relations tools well in advance to set the stage for successful advocacy initiatives. For example, the Trade Center's considerable undertaking, along with other players, to host the, "World Trade Week." This is an excellent public awareness tool and serves as an example of using public relations tools that are complimentary to successful advocacy.

Furthermore, Asfour's interview verified that there is a fundamental perception and acceptance on the part of the Trade Center leadership that they must assume a specialized position of leadership activities within the business community in order to leverage future policy influence. Asfour confirmed that his organization would enthusiastically consider advice on assuming a policy coalition leadership role of leading the community on tax related reform. Asfour is well positioned for understanding and explaining the aggregate impact/burden of taxes on business. It is apparent that the Trade Center possesses the resources to invest in researching and delivering information on this impact sufficiently to become the lead organization. This leadership role would particularly serve the Trade Center well because of its for-profit status (i.e. need for a credible identification as a socially responsible organization) and need for additional allies capable of delivering grassroots support.

The interview and appraisal session with **Laith Al-Qasem President, Meisa Batayneh, VP, Dina Dukhqan, ED of the Young Entrepreneurs** was upbeat and positive. Essentially, the dialogue served to confirm that the association was up to standards regarding its advocacy related activities. The resources of the membership base had been reasonably well-tapped and directed into five volunteer/executive committees (Advertising, Public Relations etc.) Al-Qasem demonstrated significant understanding of the policy arena and the challenges facing his association. For example, Al-Qasem did not merely repeat the often cited statistic that government employment accounts for approximately 38%, but demonstrated that more than 50 % of the working population was reliant upon government sources. This level of research analysis is vital to understanding the effective targeting of advocacy messages to their intended audiences.

The importance of audience examination and segmentation was alluded to in this report in a citation from an earlier report on the same point, “ While using some of the normal communication techniques of business associations from other nations, the Jordanian groups have failed to grasp the need for sophisticated identification of vital target audiences, for refinement of their association messages, and for selecting appropriate media in order to tell their associations’ stories” (GSC Report, Recommendations, Page 5).

During the interview with Al-Qasem a number of well-written documents and policy-oriented papers were displayed that demonstrated that essential organizational communication skills had been learned (if not mastered). Several documents were presented to demonstrate that the Young Entrepreneurs association was applying most of the technology advocacy tools available. In short, the Young Entrepreneurs appear to be working well based on this interview and ought to be encouraged to maintain their direction.

Although the interview was not long enough to make a determination of the involvement of the Young Entrepreneurs in policy coalitions, it was evident that they relish the role they play in TIJARA and appreciate the need to join with other organizations in policy coalitions.

An interview dissimilar in nature to those previously reported upon occurred with **Rana Diab, Executive Director, Jordanian Intellectual Property Association (JIPA)**, providing a more fertile ground for the assignment of this consultancy. The organizational account provided by Diab offered mixed results in terms of efficient advocacy practices. It revealed both an elevated level of advocacy learning and the real-life difficulties of implementing the concepts.

Without a doubt Diab exhibited that the executive staff of JIPA is first-rate. Her organizational account revealed that her association has an exceptional orientation towards membership recruitment and development (110 members). Furthermore, she provided a well-detailed depiction of an organizational membership committee structure that integrates most members into active and meaningful roles in the advocacy related policy decisions of the organization.

JIPA deserves special commendation regarding its numerous public relations initiatives. Initiatives such as: IP Week, an up-to-the-minute IP Help desk, IP Publications, Statistical Studies, an IP Directory, and an IP Manual Guide were covered in the course of the interview. JIPA’s efforts of building public awareness in the direction of intellectual property issues through national high school student comprehension competitions ranks among the more innovative projects discovered within the Jordanian business association community. Recognition that some issues are not advocacy related, but rather more public relations/awareness matters and hence less open to government intervention is an important aspect of understanding advocacy practices.

One interesting note was the fact that 70% of JIPA’s membership base is comprised of individual members; a number of who are lawyers (as opposed to a balance of the membership base which is composed of Information Technology and Communication,

pharmaceutical, music/entertainment organizations). This highlights a potential problem of lawyers driving agenda priorities in policy directions less appropriate for other members (tail wagging the dog). For example, Diab detailed a concentration of JIPA efforts toward schooling a special class of intellectual property judges. It raises the question of the vital necessity and/or priority of creating a whole new class of Intellectual Property judges (As opposed to, for example, creating new R&D centers for IP development). The point related to choosing the most advantageous policy focus among competing priorities is even more evident when one considers that enforcement appears to be a more critical resource priority. Current police enforcement is cruelly limited to five officers and a single automobile.

Unfortunately, Diab's comments concurrently demonstrated that there is a discord between the advocacy knowledge of her organization and its policy related achievements. Whereas JIPA possesses an excellent organizational appreciation of advocacy fundamentals, it must still demonstrate that it can successfully implement many of them. JIPA would benefit from additional coaching regarding implementation of their advocacy agenda. For example, Diab evidenced this discord by explaining how JIPA has benefited from the direct policy support/involvement of the King, but was initially plagued (as early as 2000) by the administrative resistance of a prior Manager of the National Library (the official charged with intellectual property issues). According to Diab's account, JIPA first began drafting one or more policy papers during that period and restarted anew when another Library Manager was appointed two years later. Now halfway through 2004 there is no policy paper. Policy papers are critical instruments for advocacy programs and should be generated routinely, with an economy of text and graphics, and with modest regard to the current office holders.

Another example of mixed organizational results regarding advocacy practices was revealed during an interview with **Rose Alissi Wazani, CEO and Rami Takrouri, Chief Operating Officer of the American Chamber of Commerce in Jordan (JABA)**. Tamer Al-Mauge, Business Development Officer, also provided a quantity of organizational insight.

The information exchanged during this interview also highlights the discord between a substantial amount of advocacy knowledge on the part of Jordanian association executives and its real-life implementation; comparable to that of the Jordanian Intellectual Property Association. Once again, there is a great deal planned but thus far awaiting execution (in particular position papers, and seminars).

Based upon the interview it is easy to conclude that JABA currently possesses a dynamic, organizationally ambitious, and enthusiastic executive staff. It is evident, from the outset, that they have received a significant amount of advocacy instruction. For example, when they hand you their business cards they are quick to point out JABA's Mission Statement printed conveniently on the reverse side. It is quickly evident that JABA wishes to position itself as a champion of American Jordanian business relations. As well, the shared listing of JABA's advocacy related organizational activities during the course of the interview is ambitious. They disclosed an assertive intention to deliver a wide-range of advocacy related services and achieve a number of notable objectives regarding Jordanian and American business relations. However, as praiseworthy as these objectives may be, they

draw attention to the point that there is a necessity for greater delineation of strategic versus tactical activities (i.e. more coaching on designing and implementing strategic advocacy plans would be worthwhile).

JABA executives were advised that most of the activities that they enumerated during the course of the interview as strategic could reasonably be classified as tactical, or somewhat less than strategic, in nature. For example: executive lunches, seminars (among which is mentioned a, “Law in Business” seminar), and social events, intensified sales efforts regarding JABA members or a legal update summary were activities mentioned during the interview that fall under this category. Conversely, several activities can be more clearly defined as strategic in nature, such as the call for a “Charter of Business Rights,” or the creation of a Business Development Unit and FTA Unit. Some activities, such as a proposed media monitoring activity might reasonably fall between strategic and tactical definitions.

The JABA executives were also advised that, as the American Chamber of Commerce in Jordan, they are ideally suited to assume a leadership role within the business community by using their intended development of and support campaign for a, “Charter of Business Rights.” They are well positioned to utilize the operating models of both international American Chambers and continental North American ones. Successful pursuit of a Jordanian “Charter of Business Rights” would position JABA to receive the leadership recognition of the business community for a number of subsequent reform issues (particularly those regarding business registration or civil court system responsiveness). In championing this broad interest cause the association would advantageously position itself to leverage it for subsequent strategic business alliances when issues might be more narrowly focused, such as: American and Jordanian trade topics; or TIJARA and double taxation issues; Aqaba Port privatization and customs topics.

The interview with **Awni Kawar and Ahmad Al-Bashiti** of the **Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association – JITO** revealed that it is still in an embryonic state of organizational development. There appear to be a number of strategic priorities that need to be decided upon regarding their advocacy program. The foremost of these priorities revolves around capturing both the attention and respect of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The Ministry is currently far more inclined to focus its attention and credibility upon a competitor association, for which the law imposes formal membership.

Advice offered to this organization focused more on tangible technical assistance requirements than on sophisticated coalition building or message development suggestions. The assistance they more immediately need should be orientated toward the fundamentals of business association building, rather than technical assistance related to advocacy (i.e. the development of its membership base and related services).

The interview with **Halim Abu-Rahmeh** of the **Jordan Exporters Association** disclosed that different approaches are in fact being taken regarding Jordanian business association advocacy. Discussion with the Executive Director provided information that illustrated that its membership accounts for more than 85% of total value of exports in its sector. Its membership is composed of 130 companies, including manufacturing and service related fields.

The dialogue revealed some (fortunately) nonconforming advocacy strategies employed by JEA. Abu-Rahmeh politely volunteered that he would be prepared to join other business associations in future advocacy coalitions, in such policy matters as for example Aqaba port regulations and management.

On the other hand, the interview further revealed a surprising reluctance by JEA to join in public forms of advocacy activities. JEA perceives that it is working well by maintaining a subtle lobbying strategy. It maintains a deliberately low profile before the general public and is concerned that it will potentially alienate decision makers through public activities and potentially create more problems than solutions.

JEA conducts contacts with the ministry and prominent members of the Parliament primarily through informal meetings. Clearly JEA perceives that there are limits to advocacy in contemporary Jordan. This approach, which evidently does not serve the business community as a whole, arguably displays a sophisticated application of an advocacy stratagem.

Although it does not issue policy papers, it does conduct a number of activities on behalf of its members, such as: trainings, trade missions, research, and annual needs assessments.

Due to scheduling conflicts, the interview conducted with **Aref Al-Farra, National Coordinator for the Vision 20/20 Coalition** was substantially abbreviated.

Nevertheless, coupled with the appearance before the Vision 20/20 Steering Committee and the subsequent question and answer session enough information was gleaned to provide some basic feedback. Al-Farra to describe the coalition as one of 39 associations engaged in a project that was divided into two distinct phases. Phase one of the project included 144 recommendations regarding cross cutting issues (e.g. tax reform) of which more than 40% had been completed. Phase two was currently underway with 11 business sectors involved.

In short, Al-Farra was advised to consider reducing the sectors from eleven to a more manageable number of four if this would be thematically realistic. Consolidation would permit better public relations management as well as the pooling of resources and the perception of wider based coalitions when presenting issues to the general public and interacting with policy decision makers. These coalitions should be broad in terms of public appeal yet narrow enough to have clearly defined policy/legislative objectives. For example the interview revealed that “Educational Tourism” was a major economic boom to the nation. There are more than 18,000 students visiting and studying in Jordan. This converts to a ratio of 1 in 300 visiting students.

The advice offered during the appearance before the Vision 20/20 Steering Committee regarded topics such as: Ad-Hoc Coalitions, membership services, employing policy briefs, conducting public hearings, more immediate and stronger Parliament ties, conducting comparative analyses of policy and advocacy systems, cross-fertilizing ideas, and becoming ambassadors of social responsibility to the greater public on behalf of the business community.

Dr. Izz ED-Din Katkhuda of the **Arab Center for Engineering Studies** attended a gathering of a proposed **Architect/Engineer Association**. The thrust of the discourse was oriented toward the challenges of a start-up association that would serve the interests of Jordanian architects and engineers, and as such has no historical record available for review. However, the participants demonstrated sufficient organizational acumen to indicate likely success of their efforts and they detailed the steps taken to date enough to enable some initial feedback.

Advice was offered, and readily accepted, that would position the budding association with institutional credibility as a socially responsible community actor. The need for assuming a leadership position within Jordanian society was explained as two fold. First, the membership base is not generally considered an economically deprived class (bear in mind these are architects and engineers involved in large scale commercially oriented projects as opposed to single home construction). Second, the issues of concern to the membership will often be esoteric and narrow in policy scope.

Hence, adopting one or more social causes unrelated to the profit motives of architects and engineers will position this new association to leverage greater public support, more potential organizational allies, and the consequent attention of decision makers. Several examples of such social causes were discussed: providing pro-bono technical assistance to disadvantaged communities, sponsoring public hearings on topics such as automobile traffic planning etc., all excellent mediums for gaining public attention and providing credibility as a socially responsible association.

Finally, the interview with **Rashed Darwazeh, CEO** and **Molly T. Whelan, Business Development Director** of the **Jordan Garments Accessories and Textile Exporters Association – JGATE** was interesting for its expose of the issues of concern to this business association but, probably due to time constraints, yielded little relevant information that could be used as suitable baseline for offering customized advocacy counseling. By and large the advice offered during this session was well received by the participants and was of a standard nature previously discussed in this report.